

ANALYSIS OF GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN WRITING I

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM

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Language is a means of communication. By using a language people can communicate with each other. Using a language is not as simply as we thought because there is a set of rules that must be followed, which is called Grammar. Actually grammar is used to mean the structure of a language. It is an essential part of the use of language process, both in spoken and written language. It would be impossible to learn language effectively without knowing the grammar, because grammar helps learners to identify grammatical forms, which serve to enhance and sharpen the expression of meaning.

Language is an arbitrary sound or sequence of speech sound used in particular area Carrol as quoted by Ramelan (1992:10): "Language is an arbitrary of speech sounds or sequence of speech sounds which is used in interpersonal communication by an aggregation of human beings and which rather exhaustively catalogs things, and events in the human environment.'

Besides, people also have to know what so called language skills. These skills ease them to communicate. They are the media of communicating. They could be listening, speaking, writing or reading. Those four skills are needed to be able in having a good communication ability.

One of the languages is English. It is one of the languages used in communication almost all over the globe. It is used mainly in Britain and its commonwealth all over the world. For instance: in Singapore English is used as second language, in Australia it is used as first language. Therefore, it has become on of the main language of international communication, and even people who are not speakers of English often know words such as television, hotel, and radio. Since

English has become one of the main languages of international communication, it has a very important role in technological and scientific advances.

Having a good grammar system of a language, learners will be helpful in delivering their ideas, messages and feelings either to the listeners or readers. Language without grammar would be disorganized and causes some communicative problems, like grammatical errors in writing. Hence, learners need to know the grammatical system of language they can communicate with others in order to transfer the message properly.

In order to use a language well, learners should learn the rules of a language or to know how they work. They cannot avoid errors because errors mostly occur in learning process. It happens because they use different forms to deliver their ideas, feelings or messages so they need considerable amount of time to be able to master the target language well.

As a non native language, learning English is not easy. The language learners or students may have difficulties. The difficulties that are encountered by every student will vary according to his / her native language. Because of these, there will be errors that can be found in their learning.

The errors usually occur in the productive skills, speaking and writing, but to analyze the errors in productive skills in short time is not easy. It takes much time, money, and requires a high ability of an analyst. Therefore, the writer decided to analyze only the grammatical errors in students' writing. People tend to acquire spoken language easier than the writing language. This is because people first know the spoken before they know the written one and a human child always speaks a language first before he is accustomed to the writing system of his language.

The explanation above does not imply that writing or written language is less important than the spoken one. The more cultivated and more technologically advanced a man is the more he involved in a written form of a language. It means that writing also plays an important role in a modern society. Writing language is getting more and more essential today. It should be mastered in order to be literate. However, Indonesian students have only little enthusiasm for their writing tasks. Every time they have writing tasks, they feel it is difficult to do. Meanwhile, they

should have strong foundation for their writing skills before entering the next level of Writing class. Therefore, it is crucial for them to master this skill.

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In composing a good writing, we should notice some aspects. Grammar is one important aspect that should be mastered in order to make a well structured writing. However, writing in different language is not always as easy as writing in our own language since there are some different rules in the writing systems and these differences sometimes make us make errors. That is why; the researcher choose to analyze the grammatical errors in writing.

The word grammar has several meanings and there is no universally accepted definition. Different experts define the term grammar differently. There is no fixed definition of grammar. Grammar is the structure of the language. It is the way when people make their language. People need grammar therefore they can make correct language. Without having grammar, people cannot make the correct structure of the language.

Leech (1982:3) defined grammar as something in to the mechanism according to which language works when it is used to communicate with other people. People need grammar therefore their language could be understood by others. It is very important because our language should be correct and understandable by others.

Harmer (2001:12) defines grammar as the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language.

Having known the definition of grammar, it is not hard for us to understand why grammar is useful and important. Without knowing the grammar of a language, someone cannot be said to have learned the language. Besides, it seems impossible to learn a language without learning the grammar because it tells how to use the language. People learn how to construct a good message based on

the rules they have known and try to convey the message to the others. These rules are termed as grammar.

The mechanism of grammar cannot be seen concretely, because it is rather abstractly represented in the human mind. However, we know it is there because it works. One way of describing this mechanism is by means of a set of rules which allow us to put words together in certain ways which do not allow others. The meaning of a message conveyed by language has to be converted into words put together according to grammatical rules and these words are then conveyed by sounds.

Writing involves more than just producing words and sentences. It to be able to producing words and sentences. To be able to produce a piece of writing, we should be able to write a connected series of words and sentences which are grammatically and logically linked, so that the purpose we have in our mind will suit the intended readers. In this way, it is meant that the style of language used in a piece of writing designed for layman and people living in the village, for example should be different from the one designed for educated people such as students, teachers, doctors, professors, etc.

There is no particular about writing stated by an author or a linguist L. Strauss in J. Hartley, et al (1962:66) stated that “writing might, that is to say, be regarded as a form of artificial memory, whose development should be accompanied by a deeper knowledge of the past and, therefore, by a greater ability to organize the present and the future.” In fact, there are some acts of writing which can be used as the basis for conceiving the meaning of writing. Those acts of writing are in line with the development of learning to write through which a student should pass.

Just like speaking, writing is a way of communicating a message with an intended audience. It is a mean of expressing thoughts, ideas, and feelings. By writing we may flow out a burden occupying our mind offer our ideas and concepts to others, and share our knowledge and experiences.

However, different from writing, much of our speaking is spontaneous, noncomplex and linked to the particular situation at hand. Speech is ephemeral. It

lasts not longer than the moment of speaking. It is gone as soon as it is uttered. In some cases, especially in informal situation, a speaker pays a little attention to the conventions of speaking such as the composition of talk, the organization, development, and the articulation. However, it does not reduce the comprehensibility of the nuances delivered by the speaker to the audience.

Writing is more than just public communication; it is also a way of thinking. Writing involves a range of writer's consciousness. When we sit down, holding a pen and facing a piece of paper ready to write, apparently we are engaging in more than just one act of consciousness, such as the contents of thoughts, the organization of thoughts, the purpose of thoughts and so on. These acts lead us to create a good and careful thinking which is strongly needed when we want to produce a good writing.

Writing is one of the four language skills, in real world contexts, is not a solitary enterprise, it is a social act. It is not an activity in its own right but one which serves the other skills. So, writing has a relation with grammar, reading, listening, and speaking.

Before writing, we should plan what we are going to write about and the purposes of the writing. After that, we can start to write. We may produce a number of writing (draft) and editing in order to get the good writing—that is the final draft.

Writing involves some activities before, when we write, and after writing. The activities before we write include exploring ideas which could be building vocabulary, interviewing someone, discussion, etc. and organizing ideas which could be ordering information, using a time sequence, making an idea map, categorizing and making outline, summarizing ideas, writing titles, etc. When we write we should develop cohesion and style which includes connecting ideas, adding details, selecting the correct verb tense, selecting the correct tense, and writing the first draft.

This is not the end of writing. After we write the first draft we should edit and revise it. It could be the content, form, organization, cohesion and style, and

grammar. In order to produce a good writing we should write more than just one draft. A good writing could be the fourth or fifth draft or even more.

The different system of language could make learners to make errors and mistakes. An error is different from mistake. According to Yulianti (2007:9):

- A mistake is a performance error, which is either a random guess or a 'slip', i.e. a failure to utilize a known system correctly.
- An error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the inter language competence of the learner.
- She also clearly differentiated a mistake from an error. She stated:
- A mistake is a slip that a learner can self-correct.
- An error is what a learner cannot self-correct.

A mistake is just a slip that the learner forgets the right form. While, an error is a deviation which is made by the learner because he does not know the rule and he /she will make it repetitively. Mistakes are caused by hesitation, slips of the tongue. The learner, who makes mistakes, will sometime use one form and sometime the others. This shows an inconsistency for example:

- a. If learners produce "he must go" and he must to go"
- b. If the Indonesian learners pronounce the word error "instruction" not "instruction"

According to the findings it can be concluded that most students are not aware on the verb comes after the subject. They are confused on determining of the verb. Students also get confused on the use of simple predicate and also get confused on the simple predicate missing "be". It means that most students are confused about the using of "be". Especially, in the past form. Students also get confused on the misinformation of the next verbal word. A lot of errors were made on verbal case. It means that students are not aware in the using of the verb. There have not understood very well about its change to the past form. However, with more practice, the researcher believe that all students can write English composition well.

Based on the findings, the researcher would like to offer some suggestions to be considered in teaching to improve the students' writing ability;

1. In teaching English related to its grammar, the teacher should give more easily understood explanation in order to make the students more interested in learning English, especially the grammar.
2. The teacher teaches the grammar elements explicitly with adequate exercises.
3. The teacher should give more exercise in applying grammar not only by giving the theory of grammar because based on the results the students seem not quite understand how to differentiate when to use either past or present form of the verbs.
4. Teacher could apply a method where he/she explains the correct uses of the verb (when to use past and present) forms, gives examples of the usage, and tests the students understanding which will assure the teacher that the students really understand it. Otherwise, the students will face difficulties in differentiating the uses of past and present forms of verbs, whenever they learn English and because this is the very basic step to learn English
5. The teacher could also apply the communicative language teaching method especially when he/she teaches English grammar.
6. In writing class, the teacher should give more writing exercises to the students. So they will be familiar to English writing forms.

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